

To date, very little qualitative research has been completed and published on how exactly those who identify as LGBT use the internet to explore and define their own identities. My research aims to fill this gap by studying how LGBT members of fan communities explore, navigate, and define their personal identities through their experience in the community and work in the realm of speculative fiction (“fan-fiction”). I will accomplish this through interviewing a number of LGBT-identified members of this community and asking about how their interaction with their community in addition to their personal work affected them in their personal coming-out process. I will then analyze these interviews to identify common themes in the experiences of LGBT members of fandom communities. With this research, I hope to investigate the unique experience of defining one’s sexuality in the internet age from the viewpoint of a member of a queer-positive, accepting community, so that I may identify possible characteristics of such a community that makes it an ideal place for individuals to safely explore their sexual identities.